

**VLITE Board of Directors Annual Meeting**  
**DRM Conference Room and on Zoom, 52 State St., Montpelier, VT**  
**Minutes of June 13, 2025**  
**Approved on September 22, 2025**

Meeting called to order at 1:13 PM

**In attendance:**

Board members: Tony Klein, Larry Lackey, Sarah Hofmann, Paul Dragon, Jean Hamilton (remote), Amy Shollenberger.

**Absent:** Peter Walke

Others Attending: Gabrielle Malina, Kerrick Johnson, Steve Maier, Jean Terwilliger, Shannon Bryant, David Justice, Kim Rupe Lennox, Tara Brooks, Lee Halpern, Rachelle Ackermann, Dan Ridlehoover

**Commissioner of Public Service Updates**

Public Service Commissioner Kerrick Johnson briefed the VLITE board on departmental priorities under his leadership, outlining three focus areas: employee morale, data collection, and public engagement. He noted outdated data systems are improving with the implementation of VX Platform, which tracks transmission, distribution, and renewable energy data. Morale had been negatively impacted by understaffing, but recent hires—supported by a strong federal job market (employees displaced from federal employment)—are helping improve it.

On public outreach, Johnson said the Department continues to explore effective engagement methods using consultants and diverse outreach strategies. He emphasized the importance of not leaving people behind, identifying weatherization and electric panel upgrades as critical for low- and moderate-income Vermonters. He encouraged VLITE to revisit weatherization funding.

Gabrielle Malina clarified VLITE never stopped funding weatherization; it currently supports HEAT Squad's audits and upgrades. The temporary pause with OEO was due to available federal funding for vermiculite removal, which OEO is still spending down. VLITE and OEO are expected to reconnect once that funding ends. Gabrielle will invite Geoff Wilcox (OEO) to VLITE's September meeting to update the board on weatherization efforts. Johnson expressed concern that declining funding for weatherization would weaken the weatherization workforce and slow down the capacity for, and pace of, weatherization.

Electric rates may rise 25% by 2030 due to transmission costs, health insurance, property taxes, and power supply agreement turnover. Johnson is pushing for regional control over "asset condition" transmission projects, which currently lack significant oversight and total \$8 billion in the queue. He and other New England leaders advocate for ISO-New England to become an independent asset condition manager. ISO has signaled it is taking the proposal seriously.

There is also a 250MW energy deficit in Vermont due to canceled offshore wind projects. Vermont is uniquely aware of its shortfall because it retained regulation of electric utilities,

enabling detailed and centralized planning. Johnson also mentioned a new regional MOU addressing non-transmission costs tied to the deficit.

### **Climate Economy Action Center of Addison County Grant Application**

Steve Maier, Jean Terwilliger and Shannon Bryant co-presented the grant application. CEAC is requesting \$100,000 from VLITE to support an 18-month continuation and expansion of its Energy Navigators program, which has a total budget of \$337,425. The program provides energy coaching to residents—particularly low- and moderate-income households—with the goals of improving home energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and empowering participants to make informed energy choices in their homes.

To date, since September, CEAC has conducted approximately 80 home visits (“navigations”), over half of which have been with low- and moderate-income households. The organization has developed volunteer training materials and established partnerships with entities such as CVOEO and Efficiency Vermont.

The requested grant would support additional staffing, volunteer training, and program infrastructure to expand the program’s reach within Addison County and nearby communities.

CEAC has signed service agreements with the towns of Middlebury and Brandon in connection with those towns’ receipt of EECBG grants from the U.S. Department of Energy. Several other municipalities have expressed interest in starting similar navigator programs and have sought CEAC’s counsel.

Shannon Bryant described a typical navigation: the navigator meets with a resident to discuss energy-related goals, which may include cost savings or improving home comfort. The visit includes a walkthrough of the home, including the basement and attic. Within a week, the resident receives an initial report based on an energy usage intensity calculator. The in-person component is considered essential to the community-based approach. Volunteer involvement is expected to help expand CEAC’s capacity to deliver these services.

### **Vermont Adult Learning Grant Application**

David Justice, Associate Director at VAL, presented the grant proposal alongside Kim Rupe Lennox and Tara Brooks, also of VAL.

VAL is requesting \$200,000 from VLITE to support a two-year expansion of its Energy Works (EW) workforce development program. The funding would enable 12 additional trainings across Vermont, including curriculum adaptations to support English Language Learners (ELLs). The EW program prepares participants for employment in weatherization and heat pump installation, with goals aligned to Vermont’s climate and workforce development objectives.

VAL anticipates training 94 individuals, with 72 expected to complete certifications and approximately 40 entering related employment. The program involves partnerships with ReSOURCE, the Weatherization Training Center, and employer collaborators. Given Vermont’s goal to weatherize 11,000 homes per year by 2030—compared to the current pace of about 2,000 homes annually—expanding the skilled workforce is critical. Upon completion, VAL estimates

the program will contribute to the weatherization of 240 homes and the installation of 1,000 heat pumps annually.

VAL will also coordinate with the Office of Economic Opportunity's new Vermont Innovation, Efficiency, and Weatherization (VIEW) Training Center in Barre. VAL's training offerings will serve as a "pre-apprenticeship" track complementing VIEW's apprenticeship program. In addition, VAL plans to broaden its support for ELL students by offering English bridge classes, on-site tutoring during training, and assistance with employer onboarding. These efforts aim to help refugees and other ELLs with trades experience but limited English proficiency enter Vermont's green energy workforce.

### **Food Connects Grant Application**

Lee Halpern, Interim Executive Director of Food Connects, presented the organization's grant application, with support from Rachelle Ackerman, also of Food Connects.

Food Connects is a nonprofit food distribution company focused on linking small producers with small retailers, particularly in rural areas underserved by larger distributors. The organization operates a regional food hub that serves wholesale customers and producers in 13 of Vermont's 14 counties.

Food Connects is requesting \$30,000 from VLITE to support a \$484,479 project to electrify its delivery fleet. The funding would help replace a diesel delivery truck with an electric vehicle and install a Level 3 charging station at its Brattleboro facility. The project is largely funded through a combination of state grants—including 75% from the VW Mitigation settlement—along with utility incentives and private fundraising.

The new electric truck is expected to lower vehicle maintenance and fuel costs, contributing to long-term operational savings. In response to a question about how the project relates to affordability and serving low-income Vermonters, Halpern explained that reduced operating expenses will help the organization keep prices lower for customers, furthering its mission to ensure access to nutritious, locally produced food in rural communities.

### **Tri-Park Cooperative Housing Grant Application**

Dan Ridlehoover, Project Developer for M&S Development, presented the grant application on behalf of the Tri-Park Housing Cooperative. In partnership with Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC) Holdings and M&S Development, Tri-Park is requesting \$142,500 from VLITE to help close a funding gap in an \$8 million housing relocation and infrastructure project.

Tri-Park is Vermont's largest mobile home park, comprising 300 lots and housing approximately 800 residents, all of whom are considered low- or moderate-income. The project involves relocating 19 manufactured homes currently located in a flood hazard area in Brattleboro to newly constructed lots within the Tri-Park community. The replacement homes will be energy-efficient and fully electric. The project also includes road construction, utility installation, a maintenance garage, and environmental restoration of the vacated floodplain.

All 19 homes targeted for relocation have experienced flooding. While the newest among them dates from the mid-1990s, most are significantly older, and all currently rely on fossil fuels for heating. Ridlehoover noted that financing is expected to close this summer, with construction contracts already secured. Site work is anticipated to begin in the fall, with residents moving into the new homes by next summer.

BDCC is authorized to purchase homes wholesale and tax-free. Residents will receive deferred mortgages through BDCC, and subsidies will remain with the homes should they be sold to another income-qualified buyer in the future. The Tri-Park board views the project—and the preservation of the park’s lot count—as critical to the cooperative’s long-term financial sustainability.

### **Board Votes on Grant Applications**

A motion was made by Sarah Hofmann and seconded by Paul Dragon to approve Vermont Adult Learning’s grant request for \$200,000 for two years.

All present voted in favor of the motion with Amy Shollenberger abstaining from the vote.

A motion was made by Sarah Hofmann and seconded by Larry Lackey to approve the remaining three grant requests: CEAC for \$100,000, Food Connects for \$30,000, and TriPark Cooperative for \$142,500.

All board members present voted in favor.

### **Approve Minutes of March 18, 2025**

A motion was made by Sarah Hofmann and seconded by Larry Lackey to adopt the minutes of March 18, 2025.

The motion was unanimously approved.

### **Treasurers Report**

Sarah Hofmann reviewed VLITE finances. VLITE is still consistent and financially strong. Total current account assets are \$1,354,824 as of May 31, 2025. The total in grants payable for the same point in time is \$850,561.

### **Executive Director Report and Board Discussion**

The board discussed Community Rides Vermont’s abrupt change in circumstance. Green Mountain Transit which funded CRVT through its Mobility for All grant defunded CRVT this year to compensate for its own budgetary pressures and its necessary re-structuring of routes and services. Part of CRVT’s VLITE grant (\$60,000) was local match for the Mobility for All program. CRVT is proposing a significant change to its VLITE grant work as a result. The primary change is that in the absence of Mobility for All Gopher proposes to offer a new Discounted Rideshare Trip by using \$25,000 of the VLITE grant. Board members were sympathetic to Community Rides’ change in circumstances. The board asked for more specificity about what is changing from the grant’s original scope and budget. Gabrielle will

request for CRVT to present a table of the changes and the board will hold a vote by email to formalize the amendment.

Gabrielle relayed that some nonprofit grantees in VLITE's sphere are expressing concern about their state and federal funding situations. Some organizations have already experienced significant funding reductions which will effect their programming and operations. Vermont Works for Women lost significant federal funding and is seeking to return to VLITE for a workforce grant. Some board members expressed support to entertain a future application from VWW.

Amy Shollenberger suggested that VLITE hold a meeting to explore and discuss what its role as a funder should be in the face of significant changes to federal and state funding and resultant nonprofit unsettling. She suggested a Planning session to take place in the first week of August.

### **Board Reappointments and Officer Elections**

A motion was made by Jean Hamilton and seconded by Paul Dragon to re-appoint Tony Klein, Peter Walke, Sarah Hofmann, Larry Lackey, and Amy Shollenberger to the VLITE board for three-year terms.

All present voted in favor of the motion.

A motion was made by Jean Hamilton and seconded by Paul Dragon to re-elect the current slate of VLITE board officers – Tony Klein – President; Peter Walke – Vice President; Sarah Hofmann – Treasurer, Larry Lackey – Secretary.

All present voted in favor of the motion.

**The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.**

Respectfully submitted by Gabrielle Malina, June 18, 2025

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